

VE
23
.25
5TH
.A5
C.2

HISTORY
OF THE
SECOND BATTALION
FIFTH MARINES



1901

FIRST BRIGADE
FLEET MARINE FORCE

MARINE BARRACKS

—

QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

James Carson Breckinridge
Library



MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

34653

J. C. BRECKINRIDGE LIBRARY

FOREWORD

This history is published with the intent of familiarizing all officers and enlisted men of this command with a brief chronicle of the battles, expeditions and various duties participated in by the 2d Battalion 5th Marines during the twenty years since its organization.

The part of the narrative pertaining to the World War is taken from a history of the battalion completed shortly after the Armistice. This has been rewritten in parts and supplemented by information that has come to light since that time. Unfortunately, no diary has been kept in the battalion during recent years, therefore the latter part of this history has had to be written from data furnished by individuals who have served from time to time with this organization. It is hoped that in the future this manuscript will be revised and added to as more facts become known and new history is made by the battalion. In this manner the many deeds of valor performed by individuals and the accomplishments of the battalion as a whole may be preserved and become tradition for those who follow after.

LEMULL C. SHEPHERD, JR.
LEMULL C. SHEPHERD, JR.,
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps,
Commanding 2d Battalion, 5th Marines.

Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va.
1 December, 1938.

THE FRENCH FOURRAGERE
(Colors of the French Croix de Guerre)

During the World War the 5th Regiment Marines, as part of the 2d Regular Division, American Expeditionary Forces, fought three of its major five battles as part of the French Army under command of Marshal Petain. During each of these battles, Aisne-Marne Defense, (Belleau Woods), Aisne-Marne Offense (Soissons) and Meuse-Argonne (Champagne), the 5th Regiment of Marines distinguished itself as a unit, and for this outstanding service was cited for valor in the Orders of the French Armies of the North and Northeast. In accordance with the custom in the French Army, the colors of the 5th Regiment were decorated with the Croix de Guerre, and for having received two Croix de Guerres with Palm, the Regiment was awarded the French Fourragere. This highly-prized decoration thus became part of the uniform of the 5th Regiment and all Marines who serve in this famous organization are privileged to wear this badge of honor.

CITATION IN THE ORDER OF THE ARMY
(Croix de Guerre with Palm)

The 4th American Brigade under command of Brigadier General James G. Harbord, composed of:

The 5th Regiment of Marines under the command of Colonel Wendell C. Neville;

The 6th Regiment of Marines under command of Colonel Albertus W. Catlin;

The 6th Machine Gun Battalion under command of Major W. Cole;

5TH REGIMENT OF MARINES, AMERICAN

"Thrown into the thick of battle on a front then under violent enemy attack, this brigade immediately demonstrated that it was a unit of the first order. At its initial entry into line, in liaison with the French, it broke a violent enemy attack on an important point of the position and then undertook independently a series of offensive operations, in the course of which, thanks to the brilliant courage, vigor, dash and tenacity of the men, who yielded neither to fatigue nor to losses; thanks to the activity and energy of the officers; thanks, in short, to the personal activity of its commander, General Harbord, the 4th Brigade saw its efforts crowned with success. In close liaison with each other these two regiments and their machine gun battalion, after 12 days of incessant struggle (June 2-13, 1918) in a very difficult terrain, advanced for distances varying from 1,500 to 2,000 meters over a front of 4 kilometers, captured quantities of material, took more than 500 prisoners, inflicted severe losses upon the enemy and carried two of his strongest supporting points, namely, the village of Bouresches and the organized Belleau Wood"

PETAIN

Commander in Chief, Armies of the East.

Order No. 10,805D
General Headquarters,
Armies of the North and Northeast
October 22, 1918.

CITATION IN THE ORDER OF THE ARMY CORPS
(Croix de Guerre with Gilt Star)

5TH REGIMENT OF MARINES, AMERICAN

"During the offensive of July 18, 1918, this regiment was unexpectedly thrown into action during the dead of night over unknown and difficult terrain and displayed remarkable ardor and tenacity for two days despite fatigue and the difficulties of obtaining food and water, driving the enemy back 11 kilometers, capturing 2,700 prisoners, 12 guns, and several hundred machine guns."

PETAIN

Commander in Chief of the Armies of the East.

Order No. 156 F
General Headquarters,
Armies of the North and Northeast
October 25, 1918.

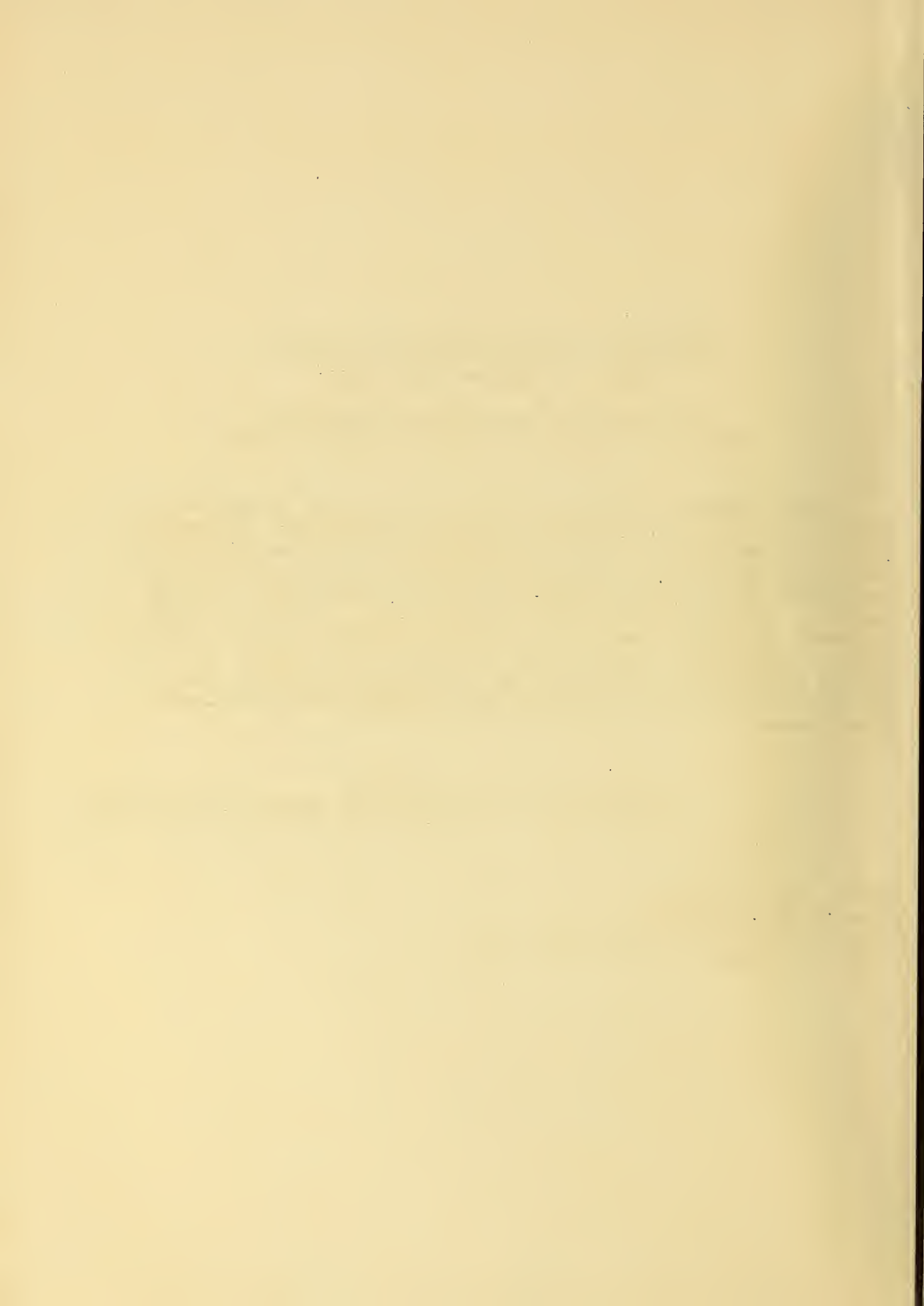
CITATION IN THE ORDER OF THE ARMY
(Croix de Guerre with Palm)

5TH REGIMENT OF MARINES, AMERICAN
(Under the orders of Colonel Logan Feland)

"This regiment took a glorious part in the operations engaged in by the 4th (French) Army in Champagne, in October 1918. On October 3, 1918, it participated in the attack on the strongly entrenched German positions between Blanc Mont and Medeah Farm, and pushing forward as far as St. Etienne-a-Arnes, made an advance of 6 kilometers. It took several thousand prisoners, captured cannon, machine guns and important war material. This attack combined with that of the French Divisions resulted in the evacuation of both banks of the Suippe, and of the Massif (high ground) of Notre-Dame-des-Champs."

PETAIN
Commander in Chief of the Armies of the East

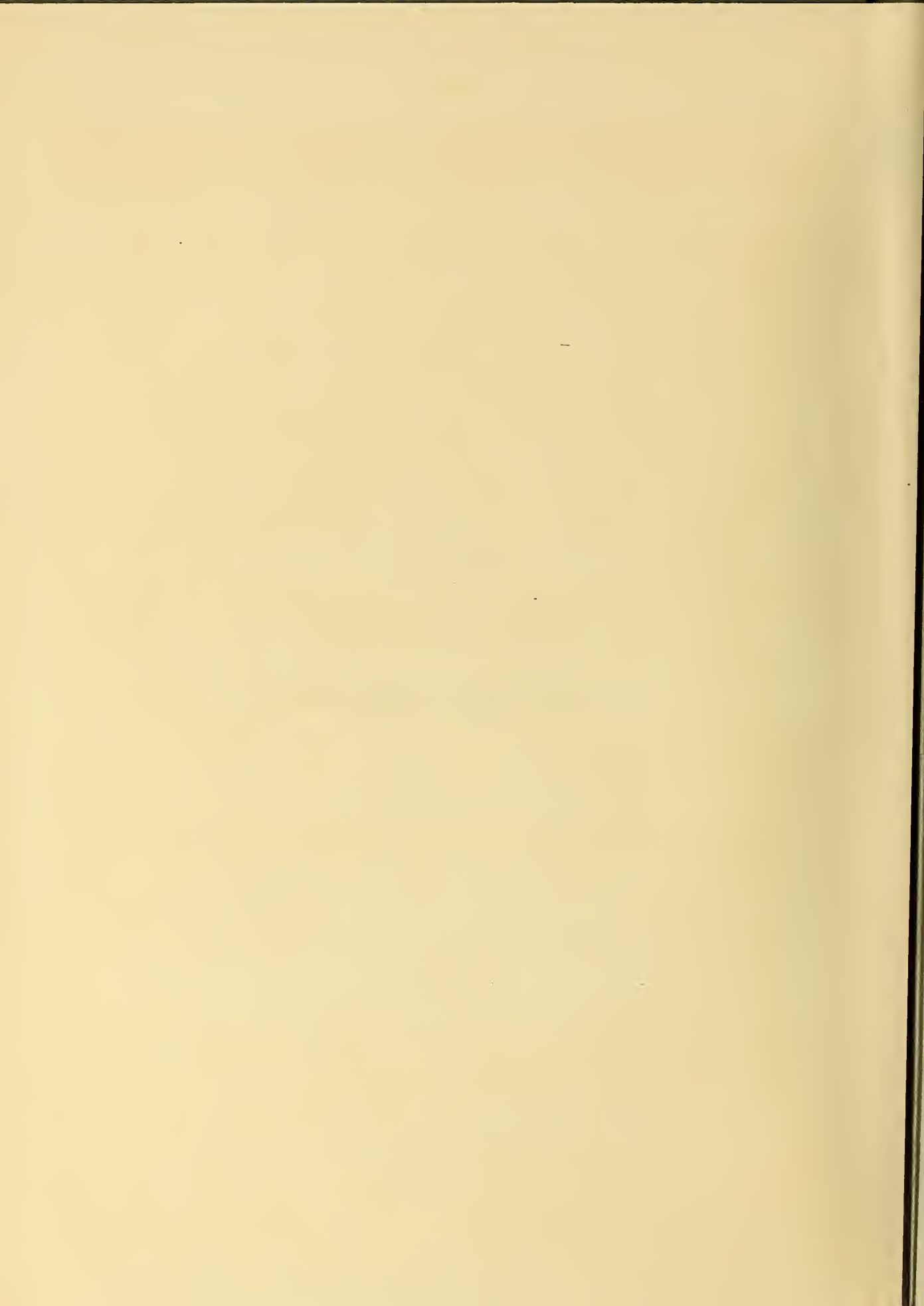
Order No. 14,712 D
General Headquarters,
Armies of the North and Northeast
March 21, 1919.



Chapter I

France and the Rhine

June 1917 to August 1919



The 2d Battalion 5th Marines was organized in Philadelphia about June 1, 1917. The 23d, 43d, 51st and 55th companies which composed the battalion had been in existence for some years previous and had taken part in the occupation of Vera Cruz, San Domingo, Haiti and Cuba. On arrival from the tropics the companies were increased to a strength of 200 men and 4 officers, the recruits coming chiefly from the New York - Philadelphia area. The battalion, under command of Major F. M. Wise, quietly embarked on the U. S. S. Hancock on the afternoon of June 9th and immediately sailed from Philadelphia. Arriving in outer New York harbor the battalion was transferred under cover of darkness to the U. S. S. Henderson which sailed on her maiden voyage from New York on June 14th as part of the first convoy of American troops to leave the United States for France. The Henderson arrived at St. Nazaire, France, June 27, 1917, where the battalion disembarked and went into camp on the western outskirts of the city. The 5th Regiment was assigned to the 1st Division, U. S. Army, whose infantry regiments had come over in the same convoy. Training, consisting chiefly of close-order drills and marches, was carried out until July 15th when the battalion entrained in little French boxcars (40 Hommes, 8 chevaux) and after two days traveling arrived at Menancourt (Meuse) where they went into billets for the first time.

Living in billets was something new for our troops. Men were split up into small groups and assigned to various houses and stables in the little French village. During the war the battalion was to be frequently billeted with the French townspeople and men became accustomed to sleeping in haylofts and cowsheds.

During the summer of 1917 the battalion was assigned for training to the 115th Battalion of Chasseurs Alpines. These troops were known as the "Blue Devils" of France and their corps was considered one of the finest fighting bodies in the French Army. Their distinctive uniforms and esprit de corps drew them and the Marines together and promoted a comrade-in-arms friendship which lasted throughout the war.

Our training with the French consisted of learning their methods of approach and attack, consolidation of positions, trench warfare, study and use of grenades, automatic rifles, bayonet fighting and company and battalion maneuvers. Practice entrenchments were dug and organization of sectors carried out simulating war conditions. The program was so arranged that time was left for our own training. This consisted of rifle practice, close and extended order exercises, marches and athletics.

About the 15th of September, when the Chasseurs were ordered away, the 2d Battalion was in excellent condition. Most of the officers and many of the NCOs had attended

French Specialist's Schools during this period and were well qualified in their duties. At this time, the 23d Machine Gun Company was ordered to Gondrecourt for special instruction and was dropped from the battalion.

On September 24th the battalion was detached from the 1st Division and moved by train to the village of Damblain (Vosges). Here they became the nucleus of the 2d Division. General training was carried out and much time spent on battalion attacks. Throughout a very cold and disagreeable winter the intensive training continued. It rained or snowed constantly and the light wooden barracks occupied by the men were slight protection from the cold. However, everyone kept healthy due to vigorous outdoor exercises. The occupation and relief of a sector was frequently carried out in the training trenches at St. Ouen. Toward Spring a number of Regimental and Brigade maneuvers were held. Many officers and NCOs attended the 1st Corps Schools at Gondrecourt (Meuse). During part of this time the battalion trained with the 151st Infantry, a very fine French regiment.

The 18th Company joined the battalion early in January, coming from Bordeaux where they had been serving with the Base Detachment of the 5th Marines. The 12th Company joined at the same time but were disbanded and the officers and men used to fill up the other three rifle companies of the battalion to a strength of 250 men.

The intensive and exhaustive training the battalion had been undergoing during the Winter of 1917-18 caused a spirit of unrest and a longing for action, especially when it was learned that the 1st Division had proceeded to the Front and was engaging the enemy. Finally, early in March, orders were received to pack up and store all personal effects and to stand by to leave for the Front as part of the 2d Regular Division.

VERDUN

The battalion marched from Damblain to Breuvannes on Friday, March 13th, 1918, and entrained in the late afternoon. The next morning, on arrival at Dugey in the vicinity of Verdun, the battalion detrained.

The following night the battalion took over the front line trenches of the Montgirmont Sector for the period of March 17th to 28th. The lines in this sector had remained stable since the early days of the war in spite of the fact that the costly struggles for the possession of the Verdun strongholds had taken place a few kilometers to the north. The tranquility of

the Meuse Heights was due chiefly to the fact that the terrain rendered any extensive operations scarcely worth the price. During the two months that followed the battalion gained invaluable experience in trench warfare at the cost of minimum casualties. Nightly patrols and wiring operations were carried out and much information and experience was obtained in correct ways of organizing a position and patrolling in darkness. The battalion came under occasional bombardment and intermittent machine-gun fire and also experienced the explosion of a tremendous land mine.

On March 28th the battalion was relieved and went into reserve near Ancemont, where it occupied a position in the Eix-Moulainville-Chatillon sector.

On April 9th, the battalion took over front line trenches in Chatillon and to the north. Here, as before, things were very quiet, but became more lively as our patrols became more and more daring. Each company had one platoon in the front, the others being echeloned in rear. Every night there were patrols, ambush parties and wiring details. These parties several times came in contact with the enemy and the long desired satisfaction of personal encounter with the Boche was realized. It was in one such engagement that the first fatality among officers occurred when the Battalion Intelligence Officer was killed.

The battalion held these trenches until April 29th, when it was ordered to a reserve position in Camp Joffe. From here it marched on May 8th to Ancemont and entrained for Brusson. Near Brusson, in the town of Merlaut, the battalion remained for eight days and then again entrained at Vitry le Francois. After skirting Paris the train proceeded north to a little town in Normandy, where the battalion detrained and began a 60 kilometer march to the town of Courcelles where it arrived the following night.

Courcelles is located in a very pretty section of France and was the only rest area the men were to know. This brief period out of the lines was perhaps the happiest in the history of the battalion. Losses had been small in the Verdun Sector and the confidence gained during that period raised the morale of the entire command to the point where it believed that it was the best organization in France.

The ten days spent in this area came to an abrupt end with the break-through of the Germans on the Chemin des Dames on May 27th. This well-planned attack completely surprised the French and within a few days the German advance units were on

the Marne, within thirty miles of Paris.

BOIS DE BELLEAU

On the afternoon of May 30th, the battalion received orders to "stand by for camions (trucks)", but at that time little realized the significance those orders carried.

The battalion, under Lt. Col. F. M. Wise, and about a thousand strong, entrucked at 4:00 A.M. the 31st, to help intercept the enemies' relentless advance on Paris. Captain L. S. Wass commanded the 18th Company, Captain C. Dunbeck the 43d, Captain L. W. Williams the 51st, and Captain John Blanchfield the 55th.

After skirting Paris the battalion passed through Meaux which was filled with refugees. All that afternoon as the truck column continued toward the front, more and more refugees were met. After detrucking and hiking about twelve kilometers, the battalion bivouaced in and around a small deserted village. During the night enemy planes bombed the town.

The next morning the column resumed the march along dusty roads, meeting numbers of French troops and many walking wounded. After an all day march the battalion bivouaced at Pyramid Farm.

On the morning of June 2d, at 10:00 A.M., the battalion was ordered to take up a defensive position and, drawing ammunition on the march, proceeded hastily through the town of Marigny to re-enforce the overtaxed French. Scattered shells were falling and every man was looking forward with grim determination to an encounter with the enemy.

A line was established from Hill 142 to the northeast corner of Bois de Veully. That night and the next day the enemy continued working forward and the French fell back through our line. On this day occurred the incident which brought forth the famous words, "Retreat, Hell - we just got here". The Division Journal of Operations says "in one case a retreating French officer gave a written order which was not obeyed". This happened in the 5th Marines. The original message reporting it is as follows: "3:10 P.M. To Battalion Commander, 2d Battalion - The French Major gave Captain Corbin written orders to fall back. I have countermanded the order.....Lloyd W. Williams, Captain, USMC, Commanding 51st Co., 2d Bn."

The morning of June 3d was quiet but in the afternoon the Germans made a strong attack in the vicinity of Le Hares Farm, held by the 55th Co. This was repulsed with rifle and machine-gun fire although for a while the situation was critical due to a gap in our lines when a platoon of French Colonial troops

withdrew. On the 4th, the Germans renewed their attacks and some hand-to-hand fighting took place. The enemy, flushed with their recent victories and determined to reach Paris, came on, affording excellent targets. It was here that the continued target practice of the Marines proved itself, a large percentage of their shots finding their mark. This engagement consisted of only rifle and machine-gun fire on the part of the Marines due to the fact that the Division artillery had not arrived. The German artillery fire was, however, quite effective and taught the men the value of digging fox holes and keeping under cover.

The Battalion line, which had been extended to take care of the ground vacated by the French, was strengthened late on the 4th by two companies of the 1st Battalion. On the 5th the activity continued with a decided increase in artillery fire.

Before daybreak of June 6th, the 51st Company was relieved from the line and attached temporarily to the 1st Battalion. It moved to the woods northeast of Lucy, where it was subjected to a severe bombardment. Pausing only to obtain badly needed rations, the company returned to take part in the first attack. This attack was to clear a hill from which very destructive fire was coming. The 49th Company led the advance but was later leap-frogged by the 51st Company. The course lay through a wheat field and a small woods, then up an open slope. Here the attack was checked, but the enemy gave way when flanked by a party from the left sent out for the purpose. In this attack, as in succeeding ones, assault fire from the hip was effectively employed. The enemy, however, inflicted heavy losses, being forced back many times only at the point of the bayonet.

At 2:00 A. M., June 7th, the battalion was relieved from its defensive position and ordered to clear the Lucy-Torcy road, and to occupy a gap in the lines between the 1st and 3d battalions. The enemy was holding the east side of Belleau Woods and from here at daybreak they attacked the 2d Battalion just as it was taking up its new position. Again our rifle and machine-gun fire was successful, and the enemy's attack was repulsed. The 3d Battalion's position was strengthened by part of the 2d and all ground held. Early in the evening, the 2d Battalion relieved the 3d in this sector. During the next three days, the 8th, 9th and 10th, the enemy continued its bombardment of our lines with high explosive, minnenwerfers and gas.

On June 11th, at 4:30 A. M., in accordance with Brigade Field Order No. 4, the 2d Battalion attacked, its objective being the northeast edge of the Bois de Belleau and Hill 133. The attack swept across a wheat field and on into the Bois de Belleau over a front of about one kilometer. It was here that the enemy's machine-guns inflicted heavy losses on our battalion. In many

cases hostile machine gunners stuck to their guns until killed. In the woods, the undergrowth was very thick, with occasional open spaces and many large rock formations. Several quarries were encountered in which the Germans had organized strong machine-gun positions. The enemy made good use of the available cover, frequently hiding machine guns until a line had passed and then firing on our troops from the rear. German snipers were also concealed in tree tops. Fighting continued all the morning with frequent hand-to-hand encounters with the bayonet. Our losses were heavy but the enemy casualties were greater and eventually the Germans were driven back about a kilometer. During the night two companies of Engineers assisted in consolidating the position and remained with the battalion, taking their place in the line as riflemen. Also, about 150 replacements joined the battalion.

The next day, June 12th, there was general sniping at which the Marines were very successful, however, the German harrassing machine-gun fire continued from the left. After an artillery preparation at 5:00 P.M. the battalion attacked, driving the enemy back but, due to lack of reserves, all the ground taken could not be held in force. Our positions were very heavily shelled during the night and the next day, the 13th, and the enemy continued their attempts to break through. Late that night, the 3d Battalion of the 6th Marines arrived, about 325 strong. Under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Feland the position was reorganized and the whole line strengthened.

The shelling and general firing continued until the Battalion was relieved on the night of June 16th, when it proceeded to a support position in the town of Mery. Out of the 30 officers and 1000 men who entered the lines two weeks before, there were only 7 officers and 350 men remaining in the battalion. The battalion stayed in the town of Mery for four days, where much-needed supplies and equipment were drawn. Here about 300 replacements joined.

On June 21st, the 2d Battalion returned to the front lines and occupied a position south of Torcy and west of Belleau. At this time Major R. S. Keyser took command of the battalion and with additional men was able to organize our position in depth. The enemy, however, did not attempt to attack but there was lively sniping and encounters between patrols. The companies were frequently shifted from one position to another. On two successive nights, our line was advanced, these gains amounting to 500 yards.

For a week our artillery shelled the enemy who answered by heavy counter-battery and bombing attacks by aeroplanes. Part of the line was in the open and particularly exposed to fire, the companies taking turns holding this position. During the

last week American planes came over and forced down all hostile observation balloons which lessened the enemy shelling. The early morning bombardments, however, continued briskly and the fire from advanced batteries was particularly effective.

Throughout the whole period, but especially in the first two weeks, there were instances of reckless valor by small groups and individuals, which resulted in heavy and unnecessary casualties at a time when men could least be spared. But, it was these very deeds which broke the enemy's "On to Paris" spirit and probably saved the situation.

When the 2d Battalion 5th Marines, as part of the 2d Division went into the line on the afternoon of June 1st along the Paris-Metz Highway, the French had been retiring along the whole Rheims-Soissons front from one to ten miles a day for five days. No unit had stood against the German masses. The first organization to stand was the 2d Division, and it not only stood but went forward. The Marine Brigade engaged four German divisions during the month of fighting in the Belleau Wood and captured a thousand prisoners. The French went so far as to say that the stand of the Marine Brigade, in its far-reaching effects, marked one of the great crises of history and, practically, saved Paris. This battalion can justly be proud of the role it played in this great battle.

On July 3d, a small detail from each company left to participate in the parade in Paris on July 4th. That night the battalion moved to a support position in the Bois de Gros Jean. It was relieved July 5th. On July 6th the battalion, having just drawn new equipment, was preparing to march toward Meaux for a rest, when the orders were changed. It hastened to the reserve trenches near Cruttet, for an expected enemy attack. The attack did not develop. On July 16th, after ten days in this position, orders were received to "Stand by for Camions".

SOISSONS

Camions were boarded by the 2d battalion about 4:30 P.M. July 16th. The battalion was commanded by Major R. S. Keyser, the 18th by Captain L. S. Wass, the 43rd by Captain J. D. Murray, the 51st by Captain W. O. Corbin and the 55th by Lieutenant E. D. Cooke, U.S.A. The battalion detrucked the next day at noon and began one of the hardest marches in its career. On every road and across fields, as far as the eye could see, were endless streams of infantry, cavalry, artillery, trucks and wagons, and among them many tanks and armored cars, all moving in the same general direction, forward. It began to rain and,

as night came on, it brought such darkness that it was impossible to see a foot ahead. On into the Bois de la Retz the battalion column struggled, falling into ditches, climbing over over-turned trunks, the men holding on to each others rifles or coat tails to avoid getting lost or mixed with other commands.

At 4:35 A.M. on July 18th, a terrific, deafening barrage opened up. The battalion double-timed through the forest and, amid the enemy's counter-barrage, took up positions in the front line. Immediately the signal for attack was given and all companies went over the top just at 6:00 A.M., the hour set.

The attack went through the barbed wire laced among the heavy trees and underbrush and carried the enemy's front line, amid machine-gun fire and heavy shelling. The bursting shells among the trees caused many of our losses. The second positions were soon taken, along with a great number of prisoners, and the attack cleared the forest, following the barrage toward the reserve positions. The 55th Co. on the left, followed the Paris-Marburgh Highway. The 51st Co., acting as liaison company with the 9th Infantry, was on the right. Throughout the attack, good liaison with the flanks and rear was most difficult to obtain. In the enormity and swiftness of the attack, many of the fine points had been necessarily sacrificed. Verte Fieulles Farm was taken by the 51st Co. working in conjunction with the numerous tanks which crushed most of the machine-gun positions. At the cross roads, about two kilometers north of Beaurepaire Farm, the direction of the attack changed sharply to the right. Overhead there was intense aeroplane activity, the enemy succeeding often in bombing and machine-gunning our lines. Behind, our own artillery was continually displaced forward and many guns could be seen firing from the open fields over which the troops had just passed. By this time, enemy artillery positions were being encountered and many guns were captured by this battalion.

At the ravine running north out of Vauxcastile strong machine-gun resistance was met and the battalion paused while tanks worked around and broke down the opposition. The companies had now become somewhat scattered due to the speed of the advance. Some units were as far north as Chaudon and Maison Nueve Farm and others as far as Vauxcastile. The Morroccans, of the French Foreign Legion on our left, were doing great work. Having taken all objectives, the battalion halted late in the afternoon in the ravine running northwest from Vierzy, and re-organized. Greatly fatigued, the men hoped to get food and rest, but this hope was short-lived as the battalion was again ordered to renew the attack in conjunction with the Morroccans. After advancing about half a kilometer, the right was held up by heavy fire. This was overcome and the advance continued for about a kilometer more. Here stubborn resistance was met on the left which checked that part of the line. At this point, groups of

allied tanks appeared and advanced on the machine-gun nests. The heavy shelling drawn by the tanks caused a number of casualties. The evacuation of wounded was still very difficult as ambulances had not yet been able to get through the congested roads. Low-flying aeroplanes continued to be very troublesome, two being brought down, apparently, by our fire.

Dusk found the assault waves held up by machine-gun fire, from the front and flanks. These guns were concealed in wheat fields. At about 9:00 P.M. the first wave was drawn back and a position organized in several old trenches about two kilometers northeast of Vierzy. Liaison was established with the French on the left and the 6th Marines, who had come up, on the right. Later that night the battalion was shifted to a position running parallel to the main road to Soissons, where it remained the next day. On the night of July 20th the battalion was shifted to a supporting position in front of Vierzy. Here it came under heavy shelling from high explosives and gas. On July 21st the 5th Regiment was relieved and moved to the rear where it bivouaced, remaining in support until the 25th.

The magnificent dash and power displayed in the attack on Soissons by the 2d Division, of which this battalion was a part, turned the tide of war definitely in favor of the Allies. A general withdrawal from the Marne was immediately begun by the enemy. Although the German armies still continued to fight stubbornly to prevent disaster they were to be steadily pushed back until their final collapse in November.

Following the battle of Soissons, Major Keyser was relieved to become Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, of the 2d Division, and Lieutenant Colonel Wise returned and took command. On July 25th, the battalion hiked to Boissy, spent one night there and moved on the next day to Boullancy. Here it was billeted for four days. On the 31st the battalion entrained at Nanteuil, arriving at Nancy the next day. Near here, in the little town of Vandœuvre, it remained until August 5th.

PONT-A-MOUSSON

On August 5th, the battalion left the vicinity of Nancy and, stopping for the night in Elsy, moved into the Pont-a-Mousson sector. The 13th, 4th and 55th Companies took the front line and the 51st Company the support position on Mousson Hill.

This was known as a very quiet sector and turned out to be so. But, just a few hours after taking over the line, a patrol

of the 18th Company sighted a large party of men in No Man's Land. Suddenly there was a heavy explosion among them and the party scattered, our machine guns firing on them as they ran. They apparently called for their barrage for it soon came, falling on the raiders themselves. However, it was shifted on to the sector of the line held by the 18th and 55th Companies and with rather extraordinary accuracy blew up the only ammunition dump in town and caused several casualties. From the wounded prisoners secured, it was learned that they were a group of cadet officers who were putting on a trench raid as part of their training. It seems the explosion was caused by some fault in a Bangalore Torpedo being brought over to make an opening in our wire.

From then until the time the battalion left the sector there was hardly a shot fired. Everyone rather enjoyed the quietness and the sight of peasants serenely working their crops almost in the front lines. On the 11th, the battalion moved to a reserve position at Liverdun. The battalion was relieved August 16th and marched to Selancourt, and from there to Camp Bois de l'Aveque, where it remained until August 21st, engaged in various courses of training. On this date it marched to Govilliers. Here the usual drills and maneuvers were carried out, particular emphasis being placed on getting the replacements into shape.

ST. MIHIEL

On September 4th, the battalion left Govilliers and began its march toward the St. Mihiel salient. On this march, parts of several American Divisions were seen and all towns were crowded with American troops, so that bivouacs were made in various woods.

The 5th Marines arrived on the east side of the salient the night of September 10th and bivouaced in Bois des Hayes. During the afternoon and night of the 11th the 2d Battalion moved on in a downpour of cold rain to its position for attack. Major R. E. Messersmith was in command. The 18th Company was commanded by Captain G. D. Jackson, the 43d by Captain C. Dunbeck, the 51st by Captain J. Keeley and the 55th by Captain De W. Peck. At 1:00 A.M. on the 12th, a tremendous barrage opened, and at 5:00 A.M. the battalion amid a rather weak counter-bombardment, jumped off in support of the 9th Infantry.

Leaving the trenches at Limey and advancing by bounds, the battalion followed a bearing of 11 degrees. For several

kilometers the country was so torn up with trenches and holes that most of the tanks accompanying the attack were soon left struggling behind. All day the advance continued thus, the 9th Infantry taking care of the enemy in front, our artillery almost silencing the enemy's guns and American planes controlling the air. Late in the afternoon the battalion bivouaced in the lee of a slope just north of Bois d'Heiche, over seven kilometers from the line of departure.

The next afternoon September 13th, the Regiment took the front line and the 2d Battalion moved up to a support position, occupying a ravine in the southern edge of Bois de Fey, about a kilometer east of Thiaucourt. Here all companies dug in and remained until the night of the 15th, being subjected to intermittent bombardment. While in this position a low-flying aeroplane was brought down by rifle and machine-gun fire from the battalion.

The night of the 15th the battalion moved to a position north of Jaulny to meet an expected attack. Fire from our front lines drove off the enemy patrols and the attack did not develop. On September 16th the battalion was relieved and proceeded by day to Bois de Minorville. The battalion remained in bivouac in the Bois de Minorville three days and then, after a hard march south, reached Blenod-les-Toul.

The St. Mihiel offensive is remarkable in our World War history in that it was the first assembly of an American army for an independent operation under American command. The enemy had occupied the Salient for four years and had strengthened its natural features with field fortifications. It proved that a great American Force of over half a million men could be concentrated and successfully led by our own officers. The part played in this attack by the 2d Division was distinguished and the 2d Battalion 5th Marines did its share to bring about the glorious victory which was attained.

CHAMPAGNE

The battalion was billeted in Blenod-les-Toul until September 25th, on which date it marched to Domgermain and entrained. Detraining at Chalons, the battalion marched to the town of Courtesols where it went into billets. During the four days it remained here there was never a pause in the distant rumbling of guns or in the passage of tremendous numbers of Allied planes overhead.

On the afternoon of September 29th, orders for a move were received. That night the battalion boarded camions and headed north. Arriving at Suippe the same night it detrucked and marched to Bois de la Cote. During the night of October 1st-2d, the 2d Battalion relieved the French in the vicinity of Somme Py. The positions continued to receive heavy shelling from the enemy.

The ridge the 2d Division was ordered to attack was named Blanc Mont due to the chalky nature of the ground. It was a commanding terrain feature for whose control the French had made many costly attempts. The country is rolling with fairly steep slopes, and covered with patches of scrub pine, most of which had been devastated by shell fire. An elaborate trench system covered the whole area. This was one of the critical points of the Hindenburg Line and contained many large concrete machine-gun emplacements and strongly fortified centers of resistance.

At 5:00 A.M., October 3d, the battalion, commanded by Major R. E. Messersmith, jumped off and followed in support of the 6th Marines at about 600 meters. The 18th and 51st Companies, led by Captain G. D. Jackson and Captain J. Keeley respectively, formed the first wave; the 43d under Captain C. Dunbeck and 55th under Captain De W. Peck formed the second wave. A platoon of the 55th Company under 1st Lt. L. C. Shepherd was detailed to maintain liaison between the 5th Marines and the 23d Infantry on our right. Over trenches and ground strewn with French and enemy dead and under heavy shelling, the attack pushed forward following a bearing of about 340 degrees. Soon machine-gun fire and increasing artillery fire from the west showed that the French on the left were not advancing and that this flank was exposed.

About noon, the 6th Marines reached their objective, trench St. Etienne. Their right rested on the Somme Py- St. Etienne road, and their line extended about a kilometer west. Toward the gap on their left this battalion was thrown, attacking Blanc Mont where very heavy machine-gun and artillery fire was encountered. This ridge was stubbornly defended, but finally at dusk the top was gained and a line established joining the 6th Marines on the right and the 10th Battalion of French Chasseurs on the left. This position was consolidated, our line facing in a westerly direction.

About midnight, receiving orders that the attack would be continued in the morning, this battalion shifted into a position behind the 6th Marines. At 6:00 A.M., October 4th, under a terrific enemy bombardment, the 2d Battalion leapfrogged the 6th Regiment and attacked in a northwesterly direction. The advance was met by heavy machine-gun fire from the front and

from both flanks, and was constantly harassed by low-flying planes. Working forward slowly, the attack continued until about 2:30 P.M. when it reached a knoll overlooking St. Etienne. Further advance was impossible, on account of machine-gun fire and point blank artillery fire from the front and both flanks which were entirely exposed. In lee of this knoll the 1st and 2d Battalions organized a position across the St. Etienne road with both flanks in the air. Later, liaison was established with the 23d Infantry on our right but toward the left no contact was made. That afternoon the enemy attempted to counter-attack from our left front and during the night an attack was made from the rear. These assaults were both repulsed. The next morning, October 5th, the French advanced on the left and in the afternoon the 6th Marines passed through our positions and carried on the attack, leaving the 5th Marines in support.

The battalion remained in position until 7:30 P.M., October 6th, then moved back to trenches east of Mont Blanc. Here it stayed in a support position until the 9th. During this time there was scattered shelling. On the night of the 9th, the battalion marched to a point about two kilometers south of Souain and bivouaced for the night in the woods.

The battle of Blanc Mont is probably the most difficult engagement in which the battalion participated during the entire war. Our losses were unusually heavy in killed and wounded. The success obtained, however, was an outstanding victory for American arms. The brilliant maneuver and rapid advancement of the 2d Division resulted in the capture of the dominating German positions on the Medeah Farm - Blanc Mont Ridge and permitted continued advance towards St. Etienne. This success carried forward the French divisions on the right and left and enabled the whole French IV Army to advance, causing the enemy to evacuate their lines and retreat from the Arnes to the Suippes River, thereby liberating the famous city of Rheims from shell-fire to which it had been subjected for four years.

The battalion spent October 10th at Camp Normands, moving from there to Somme Suippe and then to Camp Carrieres. In this camp, which was near Chalons sur Marne, the usual routine of cleaning up and drill was carried out. Here the battalion received about 500 replacements and the ever-present task of assimilating them was taken up.

On October 19th the battalion marched to Camp Montpelier, near Suippe, the 4th Marine Brigade again being placed at the disposal of the French. Before dawn of the 20th, the battalion began a forced march which was to last for twenty hours. It had been the French general's plan to use the Marines as the spearhead of another attack but fortunately for us the line was broken by French troops and our battalion was halted at Semide and bivouaced.

The next day the battalion marched back and bivouaced in the woods at Bemont Farm. Moving from here on October 24th, it

marched to Camp Montpelier, the same night receiving orders to stand by for camions. On the morning of the 25th, in camions, the battalion headed for the Argonne, little suspecting it was to be our last battle.

ARGONNE-MEUSE

Leaving the camions at Les Islettes on October 25th, the battalion the same afternoon started its night march through the Argonne Forest. A bivouac was made in the small woods just south of Exermont. Here the battalion remained under cover for four days, changing position on the 30th to a small woods nearer the line. On the night of October 31st it moved to the jump-off position, the battalion being formed along the road running east out of Sommerance.

At 1:00 o'clock our powerful barrage opened up. The enemy replied at once with a heavy counter-barrage which only began to decrease an hour after the attack started. "H" hour was 5:30 A.M., November 1st, and at that time, under heavy artillery and indirect machine-gun fire from the enemy, the 2d Battalion jumped off following in close support of the 1st Battalion. The Battalion was led by Captain C. Dunbeck, with Captain S. C. Cumming commanding the 51st Co., Lt. C. D. Baylis the 55th Co., Captain N. H. Massie the 43d Co. The 18th Co., under Captain J. R. Foster, acted as right liaison Company with the 89th Division.

The enemy trenches around Landres et St. Georges were soon taken along with quite a number of prisoners, and the attack continued on to the first objective. Here, on a line running east and west through the northern edge of Bois l'Epasse, the 2d Battalion passed through the 1st Battalion and took the lead. Opposition was met and overcome in the town of Landreville, the battalion taking a number of machine guns and over 100 prisoners. One machine-gun crew was caught firing from a window from which a Geneva Red Cross was flying. In the woods one and one-half kilometers from Bayonville, the 55th Co. executed a flanking movement and drove the enemy from Hill 299. A heavy fire had been received from this hill which had checked the battalion. In these woods were captured approximately 30 machine guns, one battery of 8-inch and about 12 6-inch guns. There were about 30 officers and N.C.Os of the enemy found at their guns, all killed or wounded.

Closely following the barrage, the line passed on to the second objective, the ravine one kilometer north of Bayonville. Here the battalion halted for 40 minutes and were leapfrogged by the 3d Battalion.

The 2d Battalion followed in support of the 3d Battalion and on reaching the third objective organized a support position on Hill 300. Here it remained until the morning of November 3d, being subjected to intermittent artillery fire. The weather was very cold and it rained continually.

At 6:00 A.M. on the 3d, the 2d Battalion leapfrogged the 3d Battalion and followed in support of the 9th Infantry who had taken the lead. Following a bearing of 15 degrees, it advanced over the hilly country, our right flank passing through Nouart. In the afternoon, the 9th Infantry gained its objective and the battalion organized a support position on a hillside about one kilometer north of Nouart. Enemy planes flying low attempted to enfilade our lines with machine-gun fire and an enemy battery at close range brought direct fire on several companies, inflicting considerable casualties. As soon as they were spotted the 37-mm gun was brought into action which caused the three enemy guns to quickly retire.

At 3:00 A.M. the next morning, November 4th, in the cold rain, the battalion continued the advance northward, still supporting the 9th Infantry. The route taken was through Le Champy Haut, thence to a position 500 yards south of La Tuileire Farm. This position was held from 9:00 A.M. until 9:00 P.M. All during this time the battalion was under extremely heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, several companies having to wear gas masks for four hours continuously. Quite a number of enemy planes harassed our position and spotted the artillery fire.

At 9:00 P.M. the battalion moved to La Belle Tour Farm and took up a front line position facing northeastward toward Pouilly, between the 9th Infantry and the 89th Division. Strong patrols were sent to the river bank. This position was held during the day of November 5th and on the morning of the 6th the battalion moved to a position in reserve about one and a half kilometers northeast of Beaumont where it stayed two days. The weather continued rainy and cold, ice forming in the water-soaked holes the men were forced to dig for protection against artillery fire. The losses through sickness were becoming very heavy.

On the afternoon of the 9th the 2d Battalion marched to Bois de Limon, where orders were received that the Regiment would make a forced crossing of the Meuse River. The Engineers were directed to make foot-bridges and bring them down to the river, in sections, for launching after dark.

At 8:00 P.M., November 10th, the 2d Battalion moved to a little valley just north of Bois de l'Hospice preparatory to forcing a river crossing, of the Meuse. The location of the battalion was soon discovered by the enemy and then began one of the heaviest bombardments ever experienced. The night was black and the fog so heavy that the enemy's flares were useless, which saved the battalion from annihilation.

Exposed to bombardment and withering machine-gun fire, the 2d Battalion finally, at about 10:00 P.M., crossed the river on the foot-bridge of the 1st Battalion, our own having been destroyed. On reaching the opposite bank of the Meuse, it was found that the enemy held the hillside in force and heavy machine-gun fire at very close range was placed on our troops. Using the river bank as protection, the companies worked north destroying or capturing a number of machine guns. Just before dawn part of the 55th Co. and 43d Co. formed a skirmish line, attacked, and captured Belle Fontaine Farm located near the river about three and a half kilometers north of where the battalion had crossed. Several machine guns and trench mortars were captured.

This position was soon consolidated, the companies forming into a curved line with their backs to the river and still concealed by the dense fog. The enemy withdrew, but continued sweeping the ground with machine-gun fire from the hill-top until 11:00 A.M. when all firing ceased. Later it was learned officially that an armistice had been declared. The enemy made something of a joyous demonstration but our men, for the most part, slept.

At the close of hostilities the battalion consisted of about 150 men of the 43d Company, known throughout the different fronts as the lucky company, and about 70 or 80 in each of the other companies.

On November 12th, the 2d Battalion marched to Pouilly where it bivouaced. Leaving Pouilly on November 17th, the battalion started on its long march into Germany, crossing into Belgium from Fromy, France. Our troops were loudly welcomed in every town through which they passed, and in Han and Arlon, in which the battalion was billeted in turn, every hospitality was joyously extended. Passing on into Luxemburg, the battalion billeted in Useldarge, Colmar-Berg and Medernach, in turn.

On the morning of December 1st, the 2d Battalion crossed the German frontier. Continuing the march it billeted in the following towns: Krauscheid, Dauscheid, Willwerrath, Steffeln, Wiesbaum, Hoffeld, Ahrweiler and Waldorf. On December 13th the battalion crossed the Rhine at Remagen and billeted that night in Honnigen. On the 16th the battalion moved to its destination, the little villages of Segendorf and Rodenbach on the

right bank of the Rhine near Neuwied. Here it took up a position in the outpost zone of the American bridge-head.

During the winter and spring of 1918-1919, the battalion carried out routine drills and exercises. Early in January orders were issued and provisions made for disposition of troops in case of a surprise attack by the Germans or a deeper advance by our forces into Germany. Also, a number of battalion and regimental maneuvers were conducted and several division parades were held. As part of the training schedules, many athletic competitions were held and participated in by all units. Amusement was furnished by shows given by different organizations, leave was granted and life in general was quite pleasant.

In May, friction in the Peace Conference became acute and the German delegates flatly refused the demands of the Allies. The orders, so long prepared, were placed in effect and concentration for further advance into Germany was ordered to commence on June 17th. The 2d Battalion, acting as advance guard for the 4th Brigade, marched to the outer edge of the outpost zone. Captain C. Dunbeck commanded the battalion; Captain C. D. Jackson was executive officer; Captain John H. Foster commanded the 18th Company; Captain W. Hill the 43d; Captain N. H. Massie the 51st and Captain L. C. Shepherd the 55th. Just as the point of the advance guard was crossing the outpost line, on the march to Berlin, orders were received to suspend all troop movements as the German delegates had signed the peace treaty.

This was the last important duty of the battalion in Europe. On July 15th the 2d Division began its homeward movement. The battalion left Germany by train for Brest, France, by way of Cologne, Klege, Arras and Valenciennes. The 2d Battalion sailed for the United States on the U. S. S. George Washington, arriving in New York on August 6th. It was sent to Camp Mills, Long Island, and on August 8th all units of the division assembled at Washington Square in New York City and marched up Fifth Avenue to 110th Street. From here the 4th Brigade was ferried across the North River to Jersey City where it entrained for Quantico. Several days later the Marine Brigade paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington and passed in review before President Wilson and other officials at the White House.

Although the men who made the 2d Battalion famous in the World War lie buried on the battle fields of France or have scattered to the four corners of our country, the organization still remains. Our Regimental Color bears the ribbons of the French Croix de Guerre and on its staff are the silver bands of war service. Every recruit who joins the battalion wears

the fourragere and becomes indoctrinated with the spirit of those brave marines who helped to win it. It is the foremost duty of every man to foster this spirit and pass on these traditions to those who follow in the 2d Battalion. /

Casualties in action during major operations only.

FRONT	KILLED		WOUNDED		GASSED		SICK		MISSING	
	Off.	Men	Off.	Men	Off.	Men	Off.	Men	Off.	Men
Chateau-Thierry	6	142	10	416	1	22	0	34	0	19
Soissons	3	14	4	119	1	5	2	123	0	73
St. Mihiel	2	9	0	19	0	0	2	77	0	10
Blanc Mont	5	39	7	188	1	4	1	57	1	71
Argonne-Meuse	0	23	5	120	0	4	2	158	0	32
	16	227	26	862	3	35	7	449	1	205

Total casualties Officers, 53
Enlisted, 1778

Losses for six months' fighting 230%

STATISTICS

From arrival in France to departure from Germany.

BY COMPANIES:-	E Co.	F Co.	G Co.	H Co.	Bn.
	18th	43rd	51st	55th	Total
Officers joined	36	62	49	49	196
Officers promoted from ranks	13	13	12	11	49
Officers killed	3	2	4	7	16
Original strength	266	204	200	204	874
Replacements	530	397	461	473	1861
Casuals rejoined	365	177	68	287	897
Killed in battle	44	59	77	75	255
Killed in Belleau Wood alone	26	47	42	48	163
Captured by enemy	2	1	2	1	6
Original men never evacuated					71
Original men in A of O	41	56	15	51	163
Belleau veterans in A of O	65	71	61	75	272
Medailles Militaire		3		3	6
Distinguished Service Crosses	5	12	0	25	42
Croix de Guerre	25	26	39	39	129

DATA ON TRAVEL

Battalion left United States - - - - - June 14, 1917
 Battalion arrived in France - - - - - June 27, 1917
 Battalion went to Front - - - - - March 14, 1918
 Battalion departed from Army of Occupation - - - - - July 18, 1919
 Battalion arrived in United States - - - - - August 6, 1919

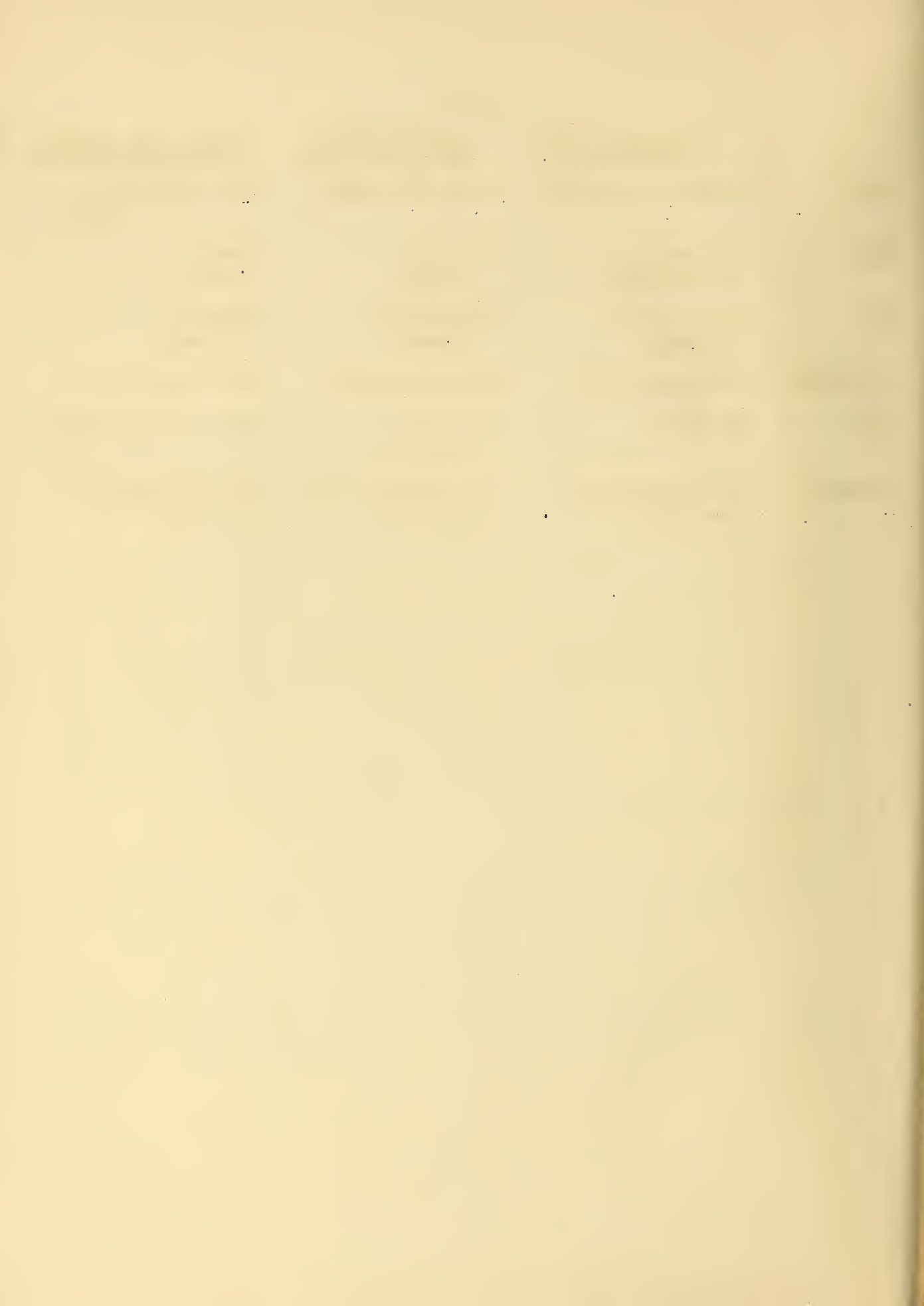
From entry into Verdun Sector, March 14, 1918 to departure from Army of Occupation, July 18, 1919.

	Distance shown in kilometers		
	<u>HIKE</u>	<u>TRUCK</u>	<u>TRAIN</u>
From Breuvannes (Training Camp)	71		
To Verdun Sector	21	0	120
To Isle of Adam (Reserve North of Paris)	75	310	200
To Chateau Thierry (Belleau Wood)	93	150	0
To Mery (Rest Camp Reserve of Belleau)	10	17	0
To Soissons Sector	60	140	0
To Belleau Woods (Second Battle)	27	0	0
To Pont a'Mousson Sector	86	0	275
To St. Mihiel Sector	148	0	0
To Champagne (Mont Blanc)	108	20	130
To Meuse-Argonne	162	30	0
To the Rhine (Army of Occupation)	309	0	0
To Steinen (edge of neutral zone) and return	70	0	0
T O T A L S	1169	417	725

Estimated approximately on the true distance traveled which distance in most cases is much more than the actual distance between the places. The extra travel was partly necessitated by traffic conditions and partly to deceive the enemy.

Thus, the total distance hiked under arms (rifles, packs, and ammunition belts) is over 1100 kilometers and this does not include the routine drill hikes or battle maneuvers. All of the estimates are conservative.

	<u>LONGEST HIKE</u>	<u>FASTEST HIKE</u>	<u>HIKE INTO GERMANY</u>
DATE	December 1, 1918	June 29, 1919	Nov. 17-Dec 13, 1918
FROM	Medernach, Luxembourg	Steinen, Germany	Pouilly, France
TO	Krauscheid, Germany	Segendorf, Germany	Neuweid, Germany
DISTANCE	53 kilometers	35 kilometers	309 kilometers
TIME	16 hours	7 hours, 48 minutes	20 days on march
AVERAGE	3.3 kilometers per hour	4.5 kilometers per hour	20.6 kilometers per day.



CHAPTER II
HOME SERVICE

Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va.

1919 - 1926

On arrival of the 2d Battalion in Quantico from overseas, the majority of the duration of the war men were paid off and returned to their homes. The few remaining old timers and those who had decided to make the Marine Corps their career formed the nucleus around which was built up a new battalion. Many of the overseas men, however, soon tired of the routine garrison duty and requested transfer to Haiti and San Domingo where Marine operations in the field afforded them better opportunities for active service.

Quantico in those days was still a wartime camp with little permanent construction. Under General Butler's energetic direction, the 5th and 6th Regiments were set to work to build quarters and improve the wooden barracks in which the men were quartered. Much time was also spent on beautifying the Post and in constructing the present Post parade ground.

An elaborate athletic program was inaugurated with the Quantico Marine football and baseball teams playing games with the leading colleges in the East. Games with other service teams were also played for the President's Cup and, until the cup was retired in 1927, the Marines were consistent winners, defeating the best teams of the Army, Navy, and Coast Guard annually. Our battalion contributed its share of athletes to these teams and as a body made several trips to various parts of the country to attend the larger games. It was during this period that the stadium was constructed by Post labor. In order to complete the field before the first game, the entire 5th Regiment, led by General Butler, marched in close formation up and down the playing field in order to tramp down the newly filled-in dirt.

During the winter of 1921-22 the losses to the government by robbery of mail trains and trucks had become of national concern and called for drastic action. As regular employees seemed unable to handle the situation, the President ordered the Marines to take over the guarding of all mail trains and Post Offices. This battalion was on this strenuous duty for over six months, operating throughout the Eastern states. It is a matter of record that, during this period, not a single robbery was committed, whereas millions had been lost by the Post Office Department during the previous years.

In 1920, the East Coast Expeditionary Force of the Marine Corps was organized which consisted of the 5th and 6th Regiments of infantry and the 10th Regiment of artillery with attached aircraft. The 2d Battalion of the 5th, as part of this organization, participated in numerous maneuvers during the years 1920 to 1925. It was during this period that the Marines made many hikes through Virginia and reenacted a number of the Civil War battles. In 1921 the battalion went to Chancellorsville where Jackson's famous flank march and envelopment of the Union Army was reproduced.

President Harding was a visitor at this demonstration and spent a night under canvas in the Marine camp. It was the first time a president had slept among the armed forces of the United States since Abraham Lincoln's Civil War visits to the Union Army. In 1922 the Brigade made a march to Gettysburg where Fickett's glorious charge was reenacted in excellent style. Again in 1923 the battalion marched to Sharpsburg, Md., and participated in the reproduction of the battle of Antietam. Among other interesting battles reenacted was the Battle of New Market in 1924, which was participated in with the cadets of the Virginia Military Institute on the sixtieth anniversary of this engagement. All these marches and reenactments of the famous Civil War battles were both interesting and instructive and served to keep the battalion hardened up and prepared for immediate expeditionary duty.

Landing exercises were also participated in with the fleet in order to gain experience and training in amphibious operations. In the spring of 1924, this battalion, as part of the East Coast Expeditionary Force, occupied and defended the island of Culebra against the entire U. S. Fleet. During the two months ashore the battalion carried out many landings and other important exercises. Again in 1925, the battalion sailed around to the West Coast and participated in a Fleet attack against the Army on the island of Oahu of the Hawaiian group. Our landing was a complete surprise to the Army defense forces and the Marines once again proved their value in securing an advance base for the Fleet.

In 1926, the 43d Co. of the 2d Battalion was sent on detached duty to Philadelphia, Pa., where it participated in the Sesqui-centennial Exposition. This company of picked men under Captain Louis E. Fagan, Jr., put on many exhibition drills and demonstrations and represented the Marine Corps in a most commendable manner.

CHAPTER III

NICARAGUA

1927 --- 1933



In 1926 the policy of sending a battalion of the 5th Regiment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for six months intensive field training was adopted. The 2d Battalion relieved the 1st on this duty in the fall of 1926.

About this time conditions in Nicaragua became very unsettled and revolutionary bands began terrorizing foreign inhabitants and destroying American property. The commander of the Special Service Squadron, Rear Admiral David F. Seller, USN, requested that the 2d Battalion be placed under his command and ordered to Nicaragua to assist the ships' detachments in preserving order in that country. Early in January, 1927, the 2d Battalion (less the 43d Co.) under command of Major Harry G. Bartlett was despatched from Cuba to Bluefield on the east coast of Nicaragua. After a short period of service in this locality, the battalion was ordered to Corinto on the west coast. The 51st Co., Captain Donald J. Kendall commanding, was left at Rama on the Escondido River (east coast).

Upon arrival at Corinto the Battalion disembarked and moved by rail to Managua and Granada, which cities were occupied until the arrival of the remainder of the regiment in March 1927.

About December, 1926, the 43d Co. completed its duty with the Sesquicentennial Exposition and joined the 5th Regiment on Mail Guard Duty. This duty was completed about the middle of February, 1927, at which time the regiment received orders to prepare for departure for Nicaragua. The 43d Co. embarked on board the U. S. S. Henderson at Quantico with the remainder of the Regiment on February 23rd, 1927, and departed the same day.

The regiment arrived at Corinto, Nicaragua, on March 7th, 1927, immediately disembarked and moved up to Managua the following day. The 43d Co., Captain Louis E. Fagan commanding, was attached to the 1st Battalion for operations and was sent to Boaco to garrison that town.

On July 1st, 1927, the 2d Battalion (less the 43d Co.) returned to the United States and a short time afterward was disbanded.

On April 1st, 1928, the 2d Battalion 5th Marines was again organized at Granada, Nicaragua, under the command of Major Fred S. N. Erskine. It was composed of the Marine Detachments of the following ships: USS Camden, USS Wyoming, USS Arkansas, USS Florida, USS Utah, USS Nevada, USS Oklahoma. The two latter ships were at that time in drydock in Navy Yards on the East Coast undergoing modernization.

The 2d Battalion, as so organized, operated in the area between Masaya, Granada, Rivas, Juigalpa and San Carlos until after the first Presidential elections in Nicaragua in 1928. It was again disbanded about March, 1929, at which time the detachments of the Wyoming, Arkansas, Utah and Florida returned to their respective ships, the other detachments being absorbed into other companies of the regiment.

The remainder of the 5th Regiment continued on duty in Nicaragua until January 1933 when it returned to its home station at Quantico, Virginia. Due to a shortage of personnel in the Marine Corps, the 2d Battalion was not reorganized at this time.

CHAPTER IV

The Fleet Marine Force

1934-1938



In December, 1933, the Fleet Marine Force was organized by order of the Secretary of the Navy. This force, designed for expeditionary duty as the land striking unit of the U. S. Fleet, replaced the old East Coast and West Coast Expeditionary Forces. The Fleet Marine Force was first organized into six separate battalions, the East coast battalions being formed from the 7th Regiment, which was standing by for expeditionary duty in Cuba on account of disturbed condition in that country in the fall of 1933.

On September 1st, 1934, the Fleet Marine Force was reorganized and the separate battalions formed into regiments. In accordance with this order, the 2d Battalion, F.M.F., was designated as the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, thus bringing back into existence this famous organization. With the change of organization, the designation of companies by letters instead of the old system of numbers was adopted. In accordance with the Army system, the company letters of the 2d Battalion became E, F, G and H, replacing the old war time numbers, 18th, 43d, 51st and 55th. As a matter of fact, the companies of the 2d Battalion were given the above letters during the latter part of the war although they were seldom used except for official correspondence.

The 2d Battalion, under command of Lieutenant Colonel John Potts, participated in maneuvers with the U. S. Fleet in the Caribbean in the spring of 1934. Landings were made at Culebra, Panama and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Again in 1935, the battalion spent two months aboard ship at Culebra where training in landings was conducted. In May of that year the battalion participated, with the 5th Regiment, in the reenactment of the Battle of Chancellorsville. On this occasion the Marines impersonated the Union Forces while the Confederates were represented by the Cadet Corps of the Virginia Military Institute.

During June, 1935, Lieutenant Colonel LeRoy P. Hunt took command of the 2d Battalion. In the fall of that year when Lieutenant Colonel Hunt was ordered on special temporary duty to Alaska, Major Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., the Battalion Executive Officer, assumed command. Both of these officers were old 5th Regiment men. Lieutenant Colonel Hunt had commanded the 1st Battalion during the latter part of the war and Major Jackson the 18th Co. of the 2d Battalion. Major Jackson had also been executive officer while the 2d Battalion was in the Army of Occupation in Germany. These overseas officers brought to this battalion the spirit and tradition of the wartime 5th Regiment. This esprit de corps was fostered and has grown in succeeding years. As new men join the battalion they are told of its traditions and indoctrinated with the spirit and desire to live up to the outstanding record this organization established in the World War.

In the summer of 1935 the battalion was ordered to Camp Perry, Ohio, to perform duty as scorers and markers at the National Rifle Matches. On its return to Quantico Lieutenant Colonel Hunt rejoined the battalion.

During January and February, 1936, the 2d Battalion participated with the Training Squadron in maneuvers in the Caribbean. The battalion was quartered aboard the U. S. S. Wyoming and frequent landings were made on Culebra. In the spring the battalion was called on to participate in the reenactment of the historical Civil War battle of Manassas.

Lieutenant Colonel G. D. Jackson succeeded Lieutenant Colonel Hunt in command of the battalion in the summer of 1936. During the fall the battalion spent two weeks in field maneuvers around Bristow, Virginia. In December, two companies of the battalion were sent on board the USS Henderson for transportation to the West Coast where they later rejoined the remainder of the battalion on board the U. S. S. Wyoming. Landings were made on the island of San Clemente and maneuvers were participated in with the entire Fleet Marine Force. On the return trip to Quantico the Wyoming stopped for liberty at Panama and Port au Prince, Haiti. In April the battalion journeyed to Petersburg, Virginia, where it reenacted the Battle of the Crater, the cadets of the Virginia Military Institute again participating.

On June 1st, 1937, Lieutenant Colonel Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr. relieved Lieutenant Colonel Jackson in command of the 2d Battalion and Major Daniel R. Fox reported as executive officer. Both these officers were old 2d Battalion men. Lieutenant Colonel Shepherd joined the battalion as a Second Lieutenant on June 1st, 1917, and served with the 55th Company during the war as a platoon leader and Company Commander. Major Fox went to France in November, 1917, as a member of the 18th Co. and was with the 2d Battalion throughout the war.

The summer of 1937 was spent in rigorous training in combat exercises. In August the battalion was ordered to Camp Perry, Ohio, to assist in conducting the National Rifle Matches.

Immediately upon its return from Camp Perry, the battalion went into camp at Brentsville, Virginia, for two weeks, during which time it participated in extensive battalion and regimental field maneuvers. During the fall an entrenched center of resistance was constructed in the Remount Area and occupied for various problems. In November the 2d Battalion won the Post Field Meet, it having previously won the Brigade swimming meet, touch football and basketball championships,

In January, 1938, the 2d Battalion embarked on board the U. S. S. Wyoming and sailed with the remainder of the 1st Brigade

and a battalion of Army troops for Culebra. Captain H. C. Watterman commanded Co. E; Captain W. N. McKelvy, Co. F; Captain J. Sabater, Co. G; and Captain A. Larson, Co. H.

The first two weeks were spent in camp ashore. Combat exercises and musketry problems were conducted during this period. The battalion then returned aboard the Wyoming and made a number of landings under varied conditions. A forced landing was made on the island of Vieques against the 1st Battalion, following which a week of liberty was spent at St. Thomas, V. I., and Ponce, P. R. The maneuvers were brought to a conclusion with a night landing on the south coast of Puerto Rico against three regiments of Army and native troops. The 2d Battalion leading the attack made a surprise landing near Point Chacaro, rapidly penetrated a thickly wooded area, overcame enemy resistance and captured the brigade beachhead line by eight o'clock. It took up an excellent defensive position on Bo Canas Hill and established outposts in the valley below. The battalion bivouaced ashore that night and the next morning successfully defended its position against an Army counter-attack. The entire maneuver was a great success and once more demonstrated that the 2d Battalion was imbued with the same dash and spirit that had carried the old outfit to glory on the battle-fields of France.

In June 1938 the majority of the officers and enlisted personnel of the battalion were changed. Major Harry B. Liversedge relieved Major Fox as Battalion Executive Officer and the new company commanders were Captain Bankson T. Holcomb, Co. E; Captain Walker A. Reaves, Co. G; and Captain Earl H. Phillips, Co. H.

The summer of 1938 was spent in extensive training of individuals and small units in combat exercises and musketry problems. In July the 4th and 6th Battalions, Fleet Marine Corps Reserve, reported for duty in Quantico and were consolidated with this organization to form a composite battalion of war strength. An intensive program of training was successfully completed. A number of officers and noncommissioned officers of this battalion also assisted in the training of the Platoon Leaders Classes and other reserve battalions.

During the summer the 2d Battalion won the Post baseball championship and again won the Brigade swimming meet. In the fall the battalion touch football team for the second successive year won the Post championship.

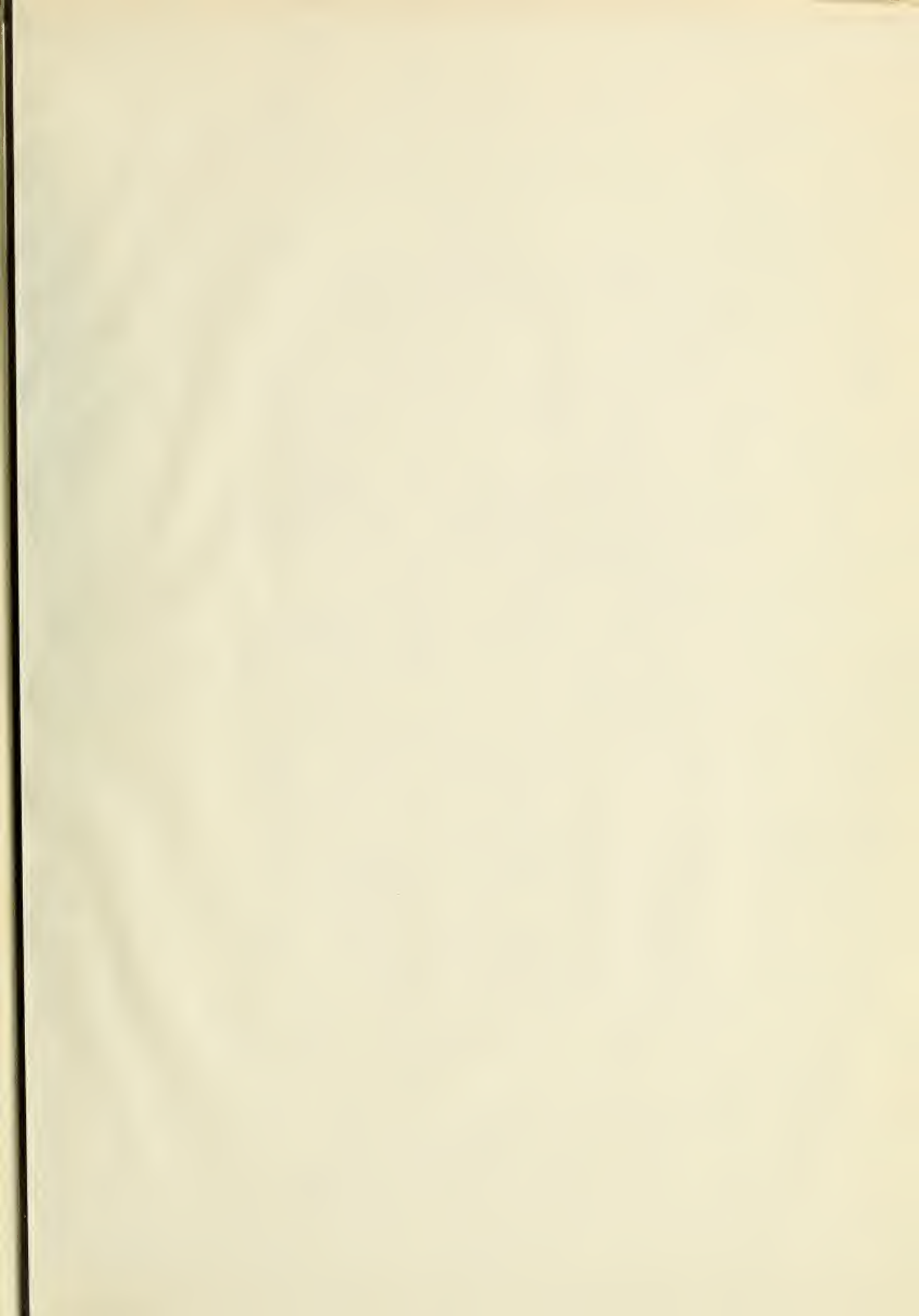
On September 15th the 5th Marines, with other units of the 1st Brigade, established a camp at Brentsville, Va. For a period of three weeks the 2d Battalion participated in extensive battalion and regimental exercises, and in a final twenty-four hour

maneuver in the field demonstrated its ability to function with war-time efficiency.

During the fall months the battalion renovated and improved its center of resistance in the Remount Area and participated in several landings along the Potomac in preparation for the Fleet Landing Exercises to be conducted at Culebra and Vieques in the winter and spring of 1939.

The close of 1938 finds the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, proudly preserving the traditions established on the battle-fields of France twenty years ago, and continuing to live up to its motto:

"SECOND TO NONE".

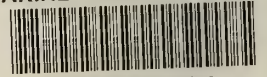


VE **RARE BOOK ROOM** 34653
23.25 U.S. MARINE CORPS. 5TH REGT.
5th
.A5 HISTORY OF THE SECOND BATTALION
FIFTH MARINES.

c.2

OCT 24 1984

MARINE CORPS U LIBRARY



300044765

7964539

VE 23 .25 5th .A5 QMCC

United States. Marine Corps.
Regiment, 5th.

History of the Second
Battalion, Fifth Marines